

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving from a user ~~one or more search criteria~~ at least one search criterion via an audio connection, the at least one search criterion including a threshold for a quality of service rating;

presenting during the audio connection, a list of ~~one or more~~ a plurality of service providers in an audio form to the user according to the ~~one or more~~ search criteria at least one search criterion;

determining a selection of the user for a selected service provider from the list;

during the audio connection, connecting the user with the selected service provider for a live conversation via the audio connection;

detecting a completion of the live conversation between the user and the selected service provider; and

while the user remains connected to the audio connection, prompting the user for [[a]] the quality of service rating for services rendered by the selected service provider in response to a detected completion of the live conversation.
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

converting the ~~one or more search criteria~~ at least one search criterion from an audio form into a database query to search the list of service providers a service provider database, comprising

responsive to a voice entry of [[a]] the at least one search criterion, converting the voice entry into the database query utilizing interactive voice recognition software; and

responsive to a keypad entry of [[a]] the at least one search criterion, converting a signal generated by the keypad entry into the database query utilizing a Dual Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) decoder.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving a request from [[a]] the selected service provider for inclusion in a service provider database; and
when the selected service provider is approved for inclusion in the service provider database, generating a record in the service provider database, the record including provider information contained in the request, wherein the provider information includes a field of service, one or more at least one of specific expertise of the selected service provider, and one or more languages at least one language spoken by the selected service provider.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
billing the user for the live conversation with the selected service provider; and compensating the selected service provider for the live conversation with the user.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the billing the user further comprises:
measuring a duration of the live conversation between the user and the selected service provider; and
calculating a billing amount for the user based on the duration of the live conversation and a time-based price charged by the selected service provider.
6. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the billing the user further comprises:
calculating a billing amount for the user based on a flat fee charged by the service provider.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~one or more search criteria include at least one search criterion is received as one of a voice request and a keypad entry response and one or more of response; and the at least one search criterion includes at least one of:~~ a category of service providers, a service provider price, service provider availability, service provider specific expertise, service provider language and a service provider minimum quality rating.
8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
providing the user with an audio list of ~~a wide-~~ an array of fields of service available from [[the]] an audio portal service provider system; and
providing the user with a unique audio field of service code corresponding to each field of service within the audio list of fields of service, wherein an keypad entry of a field of service code is received via the audio connection to select a desired field of service for the ~~one or more search criteria~~ at least one search criterion.
9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
recording the service rating provided by the user in a service provider database.
10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein determining the selection of the user further comprises:
when the selection of the user includes a voice request, converting the voice request into a database query language format using integrated voice recognition software to determine the service provider selected by the user;
when the selection of the user includes a keypad entry response, converting a signal generated by the keypad entry response into a database query language format to determine the service provider selected by the user; and

querying a service provider database according to a query generated according to the selection to select the service provider desired by the user.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium including program instructions contained on a computer readable memory to direct a computer to perform a method, when the instructions are executed by a processor, the method comprising:
receiving from a user ~~one or more search criteria~~ at least one search criterion via an audio connection, the at least one search criterion including a threshold for a quality of service rating;
presenting during the audio connection a list of ~~one or more~~ a plurality of service providers in an audio form to the user according to the ~~one or more search criteria~~ at least one search criterion;
determining a selection of the user for a selected service provider from the list;
during the audio connection, connecting the user with the selected service provider for a live conversation via the audio connection;
detecting a completion of the live conversation between the user and the selected service provider; and
while the user remains connected to the audio connection, prompting the user for [[a]] the quality of service rating for services rendered by the selected service provider in response to a detected completion of the live conversation.
12. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 11, wherein the method further comprises:
converting the ~~one or more search criteria~~ at least one search criterion from the audio form into a database query to search the list of service providers provider database, comprising:

responsive to a voice entry of [[a]] the at least one search criterion, converting the voice entry into the database query utilizing interactive voice recognition software; and

responsive to a keypad entry of [[a]] the at least one search criterion, converting a signal generated by the keypad entry into the database query utilizing a Dual Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) decoder.

13. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 11, wherein the method further comprises:
receiving a request from [[a]] the selected service provider for inclusion in [[the]] a service provider database; and
when the selected service provider is approved for inclusion in the service provider database, generating a record in the service provider database, the record including provider information contained in the request, wherein the provider information includes specific expertise of the selected service provider, and ~~one or more languages~~ at least one language spoken by the selected service provider.
14. (Previously Presented) The computer readable storage medium of claim 11, wherein the method further comprises:
billing the user for the live conversation with the selected provider; and
compensating the selected service provider for the live conversation with the user.
15. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 14, wherein said billing the user further comprises:
measuring [[the]] a duration of the live conversation between the user and the provider;
and

calculating a billing amount for the user based on the duration of the live conversation and a time-based price charge by the provider.

16. (Previously Presented) The computer readable storage medium of claim 14, wherein said billing the user further comprises:
calculating a billing amount for the user based on a flat fee price charge by the provider.
17. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 11, wherein the ~~one or more search criteria include at least one search criterion is received as one of a~~ voice request and a keypad entry ~~response and one or more of response; and the at least one search criterion includes at least one of:~~ a category of service providers, a service provider price, service provider availability, service provider specific expertise, service provider language and a service provider minimum quality rating.
18. (Currently Amended) The computer readable storage medium of claim 11, wherein the method further comprises:
providing the user with an audio list of ~~a wide an~~ array of fields of service available from the audio portal service provider system; and
providing the user with a unique audio field of service code corresponding to each field of service within the audio list of fields of service, wherein an keypad entry of a field of service code is received via the audio connection to select a desired field of service for the ~~one or more search criteria at least one search criterion~~.
19. (Previously Presented) The computer readable storage medium of claim 11, wherein the method further comprises:
recording the service rating provided by the user in the service provider database.

20. (Previously Presented) The computer readable storage medium of claim 11, wherein said determining the selection of the user further comprises:
when the selection of the user includes a voice request, converting the voice request into a database query language format using integrated voice recognition software to determine the service provider selected by the user;
when the selection of the user includes a keypad entry response, converting a DTMF signal generated by the keypad entry response into a database query language format in order to determine the service provider selected by the user; and querying a service provider database according to a query generated according to the selection to select the service provider desired by the user.
21. (Currently Amended) An audio portal service provider system comprises:
an interface to an audio connection;
an audio recognition engine coupled to the interface to receive ~~one or more search criteria at least one search criterion~~ in an audio form from a user, via the audio connection, ~~the at least one search criterion including a threshold of a quality of service rating;~~ and
a processor coupled to the audio recognition engine and the interface, the processor to search a service provider database according to the ~~one or more search criteria at least one search criterion~~ to generate a list of ~~one or more a plurality of~~ service providers for presentation to the user during the audio connection, the processor to further determine a selection of the user for a selected provider from the list via the audio recognition engine, and the process to cause the interface to connect the user with the selected service provider for a live conversation during the audio connection, the processor to detect a completion of the live conversation between the user and the selected service provider and, while the user remains connected to the audio connection, the processor ~~prompts to prompt~~ the user for [[a]] ~~the~~

quality of service rating for services rendered by the selected service provider in response to a detected completion of the live conversation.

22. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 21, further wherein:
the interface is coupled to the processor to provide the user with an audio list of available fields of service providers, accept a field of service desired by the user, provide the user with ~~a list of one or more the list of~~ service providers ~~stored in a service provider database~~ which match the ~~one or more search criteria at least one search criterion~~ and [[the]] a field of service desired by the user, and receive a selection from the user for [[a]] the selected service provider.
23. (Currently amended) The system of claim 21, further comprising:
a network interface coupled to the processor to receive a request from [[a]] the selected service provider of a field of service for inclusion in the service provider database, and the processor to generate a record for storage in the service provider database, the record including provider information contained in the request.
24. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 23, wherein the provider information includes specific expertise of the service provider, and ~~one or more languages at least one language~~ spoken by the service provider.
25. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 21, wherein the interface comprises:
a ~~public switched-telephone network interface;~~
wherein the processor searches the service provider database to generate the list of ~~one or more~~ service providers based at least partially on information indicating availability for service providers to conduct live conversation.

26. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 21, wherein the interface comprises:
a wireless communications network interface.

27-28. (Cancelled)